

**CONSENT
APRIL 28, 2026**

TAB	DESCRIPTION	ACTION
1	BAHR - FY 2027 IDAHO OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP EDUCATIONAL COSTS	Action Item

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SUBJECT

FY 2027 Idaho Opportunity Scholarship Educational Costs

REFERENCE

April 2016	The Board set the FY 2017 maximum annual award amount at \$3,000, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.
December 2016	Board reviewed annual State Scholarship Report.
April 2017	The Board set the FY 2018 maximum annual award amount at \$3,500, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.
December 2017	Board reviewed annual State Scholarship Report.
April 2018	The Board set the FY 2019 maximum annual award amount at \$3,500, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.
December 2018	Board reviewed annual State Scholarship Report.
April 2019	The Board set the FY 2020 maximum annual award amount at \$3,500, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.
December 2019	Board reviewed annual State Scholarship Report.
April 2020	The Board set the FY 2021 maximum annual award amount at \$3,500, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.
April 2021	The Board set the FY 2022 maximum annual award amount at \$3,500, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.
April 2022	The Board set the FY 2023 maximum annual award amount at \$3,500, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.
April 2023	The Board set the FY 2024 maximum annual award amount at \$3,500, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.
April 2024	The Board set the FY 2025 maximum annual award amount at \$3,500, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.
April 2025	The Board set the FY2026 maximum annual award amount at \$3,500, expected student contribution at \$3,000 and educational cost for each institution.

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

Idaho Code § 33-4303

IDAPA 08.01.13, Rules Governing the Opportunity Scholarship Program

BACKGROUND/ DISCUSSION

The Legislature appropriated approximately \$29.5M in FY 2027 for Scholarships and Grants managed by the Office of the State Board of Education. This amount

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is made up of approximately \$25.1M from the General Fund, \$1.4M from Miscellaneous Revenue, and \$4.5M in federal funds. In addition to the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship, the Scholarships and Grants appropriation covers the Work Study Program, Armed Forces and Public Safety Officer Scholarship, GEARUP Idaho Scholarship, and the Postsecondary Credit Scholarship. The GEARUP Idaho Scholarship is part of a state and federal cooperative program.

The Idaho Opportunity Scholarship is a hybrid scholarship combining academic merit with financial need and is based on a shared model of responsibility between the state and the student. Students must meet the minimum academic merit requirement set in Administrative Code to be eligible. Eligible students are then ranked based on a combination of need and merit. Need is based on the students' expected family contribution calculated on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at the time of application and makes up 70% of the weighting used for ranking students. The remaining 30% is based on the students' cumulative grade point average. Beginning in FY 2019, the Board was authorized to award up to 20% of the amount appropriated for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship for adult students who have earned at least 24 credits toward a certificate or degree and who return to complete a certificate or degree. However, H500 (2024) reduced the adult learner set-aside to 5% effective July 1, 2024.

Pursuant to Idaho Code § 33-4303, the purpose of the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship is to:

- a. Recognize that all Idaho citizens benefit from an educated citizenry;
- b. Increase individual economic vitality and improve the overall quality of life for many of Idaho's citizens;
- c. Provide access to eligible Idaho postsecondary education through funding to remove financial barriers;
- d. Increase the opportunity for economically disadvantaged Idaho students; and
- e. Incentivize students to complete a postsecondary education degree or certificate.

Idaho Code § 33-4303 requires the Board set annually the educational costs for attending an eligible Idaho postsecondary institution; and to establish the need and merit criteria, the expected contributions of the student, the student's family and available federal financial aid, and the maximum educational costs. These criteria, along with the application process, are established in Administrative Code, IDAPA 08.01.13.

The educational cost is the amount determined by the Board as necessary for student tuition, fees, books, and other such expenses reasonably related to attendance at an eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution. This cost is used in determining the monetary value of the Opportunity Scholarship. Pursuant to IDAPA 08.01.13, these amounts are required to be set for each eligible

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institution annually. Staff recommendations for determining this amount are based on the institutions' published educational cost for full-time undergraduate students attending two semesters per year.

While not required by statute or rule, the Board has historically set a maximum award amount in order to increase the number of awardees. Pursuant to Idaho Code § 33-4303, the maximum award amount may not exceed the actual education costs at the eligible institution the student attends or the educational costs established by the Board. When a student's cost for tuition and fees is over the maximum award amount, the award is limited to the set maximum award amount. Should the Board choose not to set a maximum award amount, the award would be limited by the actual cost to the student of tuition and fees and the maximum educational cost. A student's actual costs are not typically known at the time the initial awards are made. The maximum award amount allows for staff to make preliminary estimates of the total amount needed to cover awards in a given year, thereby allowing more awards to be distributed earlier.

Regardless of whether a student attended a 2-year or a 4-year institution, in FY 2026 most students received awards at or near the maximum award amount. The following table shows the total funds distributed for the Opportunity Scholarship by academic year attended, the number of students awarded, and the average amount of the award for that year.

School Year	Amount	Number of Awards	Average Award Amount
2014-2015	\$4,916,579	1,465	\$3,440
2015-2016	\$5,146,248	1,868	\$2,881
2016-2017	\$9,868,532	3,454	\$2,857
2017-2018	\$11,418,815	3,724	\$3,066
2018-2019	\$14,197,231	4,318	\$3,288
2019-2020	\$20,809,523	6,206	\$3,352
2020-2021	\$20,533,644	6,248	\$3,270
2021-2022	\$20,532,236	6,229	\$3,301
2022-2023	\$20,638,772	6,303	\$3,275
2023-2024	\$22,399,085	6,907	\$3,243
2024-2025	\$20,906,309	6,398	\$3,270
2025-2026	\$20,576,000	6,536	\$3,281

Of the awards made for the 2025-26 school year, 71 awardees earned the scholarship under the provisions established for Adult Learners.

Individual student award amounts for the Opportunity Scholarship are calculated based on the educational cost for the institution the student attends, the student contribution amount, other scholarships and financial aid the student receives, actual tuition costs, and the maximum award amount. Students may use scholarships and grants that do not come from institutional, state, or federal funds

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to offset the student contribution amount. Student loans are not included in the calculation of the eligible award amount.

As an example, based on the proposed amounts, if a student attends the University of Idaho with a set educational cost of \$28,307, the Opportunity Scholarship award amount would be calculated as follows:

	<u>Student A</u>	<u>Student B</u>	<u>Student C</u>
Educational Cost for Institution	\$28,307	\$28,307	\$28,307
Student Contribution	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Other Scholarships and Financial Aid	<u>\$10,000</u>	<u>\$16,000</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>
Total Remaining	\$8,898	\$3,254	\$13,898
Maximum Eligible Award Amount	\$3,500	\$3,254	\$3,500

The actual award amount for each student may be further adjusted based on how other scholarships and financial aid are required to be applied and the actual amount charged to the student. Payments are deposited into the students' institution account on the students' behalf.

IMPACT

Setting the educational cost and student contribution amounts fulfills the Board's responsibilities under administrative rule. Combined with setting the maximum award amount, this action will enable Board staff to begin processing applications and finalizing award determinations for FY 2027.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Educational Costs at Institutions

BOARD STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

H876 (2026), provides \$25.1M from the General Fund and \$4.5M in federal funds for scholarship awards made for the 2026-2027 school year.

To be eligible for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship a student must meet the minimum academic requirements established in Idaho Code and Administrative Code.

Pursuant to Idaho Code § 33-4303, an eligible student must:

- Be an Idaho resident as defined in Idaho Code § 33-3717B;
- Have graduated or will graduate from an accredited high school or its equivalent in Idaho;
- Have enrolled or applied to an eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution;
- Be a postsecondary undergraduate student who has not previously completed a baccalaureate degree or higher; and

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- Meet need and merit criteria as set by the Board.

The need and merit requirements set by the Board are established in IDAPA 08.01.13:

- 2.7 GPA or higher (or its equivalent as determined by a college entrance exam); adult learners may apply with a 2.5 GPA;
- Good standing with postsecondary institution if renewing;
- Completed the applicable course load requirements for renewal; and
- Completed the FAFSA by the deadline.

Traditional applicants must attend full time and meet the minimum applicable credit requirements. Individuals with 24 or more earned credits who were granted the scholarship under the adult learner provision may attend part time, within the minimum part time credit hour requirements.

Scholarships are awarded based on the student ranking until the appropriated amount is expended. Students are ranked based on the combination of the student need and student merit criteria. Up to 5% of the scholarship may be set aside for adult learners with some credits and no degree, however, due to the low number of adult learner applicants a much smaller amount is set aside each year.

Based on the educational costs for each eligible institution, staff recommends the FY 2027 educational cost for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship award formula to be set for each public institution as follows:

1. \$28,307 for students attending University of Idaho (5.3% increase over FY 2026)
2. \$32,042 for students attending Boise State University (2.7% increase over FY 2026)
3. \$28,240 for students attending Idaho State University {1.1% increase over FY 2026)
4. \$26,620 for students attending Lewis-Clark State College (1.5% increase over FY 2026)
5. \$20,068 for students attending College of Eastern Idaho (1.2% increase over FY 2026)
6. \$17,218 for students attending College of Southern Idaho (4.2% increase over FY 2026)
7. \$20,698 for students attending College of Western Idaho (8.2% increase over FY 2026)
8. \$29,463 for students attending North Idaho College (16.2% increase over FY 2026)

Pursuant to IDAPA 08.01.13, the FY 2026 educational cost for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship award formula for students attending eligible Idaho private, not-for-profit postsecondary institutions must be the average of the amount set for the four public four-year institutions. For FY2027, this amount would be \$28,802.

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BOARD STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The FY 2027 student contribution remain \$3,000, and to accept student-initiated scholarships and non-institutional and non-federal aid as part of the student contribution; and
- The maximum award amount remain at \$3,500 for FY 2027

BOARD ACTION

I move to approve the FY 2027 educational cost for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship award be set not to exceed the amounts set forth in Attachment 1.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ Carried Yes _____ No _____

AND

I move to approve the Opportunity Scholarship maximum award amount for FY 2027 to be set at \$3,500.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ Carried Yes _____ No _____

AND

I move to approve the FY 2027 student contribution be set at \$3,000 and to accept student-initiated scholarships and non-institutional and non-federal aid as part of the student contribution.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ Carried Yes _____ No _____

Educational Costs at Institutions

University of Idaho	\$28,307
Boise State University	\$32,042
Idaho State University	\$28,240
Lewis-Clark State College	\$26,620
College of Eastern Idaho	\$20,068
College of Southern Idaho	\$17,218
College of Western Idaho	\$20,698
North Idaho College	\$29,463